

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece for joining two ~~said~~ containers, that are stacked one atop ~~the others~~ (35, 36), ~~particularly onboard ships of the other~~, at their ~~said~~ corner fittings, comprising a stop plate (21) and a coupling projection (22, 23) on each side of the said stop plate (21), ~~of which the~~ a first said coupling projection (22) ~~can be~~ being placed on ~~[[the]]~~ said corner fitting of one ~~said container~~ (36) of the containers and a second ~~[[the]]~~ said ~~other~~ coupling projection (23) ~~is being~~ provided with a locking catch (28, 46, 54) for locking inside a corner fitting of the ~~said other~~ of the containers container (35), ~~characterized in that~~ the said locking catch (28, 46, 54), when viewed in the longitudinal direction of the ~~said~~ containers (35, 36), ~~[[is]]~~ being arranged laterally on ~~[[the]]~~ said ~~other~~ second coupling projection (23).

2. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the length (f) of ~~[[the]]~~ said ~~other~~ second coupling projection (23) is slightly shorter than the length of an elongated hole (33) of the associated corner fitting of the ~~said~~ other container (35).

3. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with claim 1 ~~or 2~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the maximum width (b) of ~~[[the]]~~ said locking catch (28, 46, 54) is slightly less than the width of ~~[[the]]~~ said elongated hole (33) of the associated corner fitting of the ~~said~~ other container (35).

4. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with ~~one of the claims 1 through 3~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ said leading edges (39) of ~~[[the]]~~ said ~~other~~ second coupling projection (23) have a contour corresponding to the contour of the said elongated hole (33), and ~~particularly include~~ an arc-shaped contour portion.

5. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with ~~one of the claims 1 through 4~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ ~~[[the]]~~ said coupling projection (23) has a lead-in taper (29) under ~~[[the]]~~ said locking catch (28, 46, 54) .

6. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with ~~one of the claims 1 through 5~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ a lead-in chamfer (30) is arranged on the long side (~~L~~) facing away from ~~[[the]]~~ said locking catch (28, 46, 54) at the junction between ~~[[the]]~~ said coupling projection (23) and ~~[[the]]~~ said stop plate (21) .

7. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with ~~one of the claims 1 through 5~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ ~~[[the]]~~ said lead-in chamfer (30) has an angle corresponding to ~~[[the]]~~ said chamfer (32) at ~~[[the]]~~ said elongated hole (33) of the container corner fitting.

8. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with claim 6, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ ~~[[the]]~~ said lead-in chamfer (30) ~~is first provided with~~ includes a first chamfer (52)

corresponding to the chamfer at [[the]] said elongated hole (33) and, under [[the]] said elongated hole (33), a second chamfer (53) having an angle that is flatter compared to [[the]]
5 said chamfer (52).

9. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with ~~one of the claims 1 through 7~~ claim 1, characterized in that wherein [[the]] said locking catch (28) has a sloping shoulder (34) on its top side.

10. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with ~~one of the claims 1 through 7~~ claim 1, characterized in that wherein [[the]] said locking catch (46) is provided with a approximately horizontal top side (47).

11. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with ~~one of the claims 1 through 9~~ claim 1, characterized in that wherein [[the]] said locking catch (46) is provided with a side wall (48) directed sloping inwardly.

12. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with ~~one of the claims 1 through 11~~ claim 1, characterized in that wherein [[the]] said locking catch (54) is designed as is mounted to be movable against [[the]] said coupling projection (23) .

13. (Currently Amended) A coupling piece in accordance with claim 12, characterized

in that wherein [[the]] said locking catch (54) ~~is designed such that it is cross-slidable against the force of a spring (55).~~

14. (Currently Amended) An arrangement of ~~said~~ containers (35, 36) stacked one atop the other, ~~and particularly~~ onboard ships, ~~which are~~ the containers being joined with one another with the said coupling pieces (20, 45) at their corner fittings, characterized in that each of said coupling pieces comprising a stop plate and a first side coupling projection on a
5 first side of said stop plate and a second side coupling projection on a second side of said stop plate, said first side coupling projection being placed on said corner fitting of one of the containers and said second coupling projection being provided with a locking catch for locking inside a corner fitting of the other of the containers, said locking catch being arranged laterally on said second coupling projection wherein the ~~said~~ containers (35, 36) are joined with one
10 another at least at the corner fittings of a front side of said containers (35, 36) with [[a]] said coupling pieces ~~piece~~ (20, 45) ~~in accordance with claims 1 through 9 each.~~

15. (Currently Amended) An arrangement in accordance with claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein [[the]] said containers (35, 36) are joined with one another at all their corner fittings with a coupling piece (20) ~~in accordance with one of the claims 1 through 7.~~

16. (Currently Amended) An arrangement in accordance with claim 15, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein [[the]] said locking catches (28) of [[the]] said coupling pieces (20), which are

assigned to the ~~said~~ (front [[]]) corner fittings (43) on one of the front walls of [[the]] said containers (35,36), when viewed in the longitudinal direction of [[the]] said containers (35,36),
5 point in a lateral direction, and [[the]] said locking catches (28) of [[the]] said coupling pieces (20), which are assigned to the ~~said~~ (rear [[]]) corner fittings (44) on the other of the front walls of [[the]] said containers (35,36), point in the opposite direction.

17. (Currently Amended) A method for joining said containers (35,36) stacked one atop the other, ~~particularly onboard ships, with said coupling pieces (20, 45) in accordance with one of the claims 1 through 9, characterized in that~~ the method comprising:

coupling pieces (20, 45) at their corner fittings, ~~characterized in that~~

5 providing containers with coupling pieces at corner fittings, each of the coupling pieces comprising a stop plate and a first side coupling projection on a first side of the stop plate and a second side coupling projection on a second side of the stop plate, the first side coupling projection being placed on the corner fitting of one of the containers and the second coupling projection being provided with a locking catch for locking inside a corner fitting of the other
10 of the containers, the locking catch being arranged laterally on the second coupling projection;
and

moving the said upper container (36) is rotated about its vertical axis relative to the lower container during the coupling and/or uncoupling with the lower container.

18. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim 17, ~~characterized in that~~

wherein the ~~said~~ upper container (36) is rotated about its vertical axis during the coupling and/or uncoupling by means of the shape of the ~~said~~ coupling pieces (20, 45).

19. (Currently Amended) A method for joining said containers according to claim 17 (35, 36) stacked one atop the other, particularly onboard ships, with said coupling pieces (20, 45) ~~in accordance with one of the claims 1 through 9, characterized in that~~ wherein [[the]] said upper container (36) is one of:

5 offset laterally during the coupling and/or uncoupling with the lower container and
 rotated about its vertical axis during the coupling and/or uncoupling with the lower
 container.

20. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim [[19]] 17, ~~characterized~~
~~in that~~ wherein [[the]] said upper container (36) is offset laterally during the coupling and/or
uncoupling due to the shape of [[the]] said coupling pieces (28, 45).